

WORKFORCE OBSERVATIONS FOR NORTHWEST WISCONSIN COUNTIES

DECEMBER 2003



State of Wisconsin
Department of Workforce Development

Final notice !

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Unemployment rates increase as winter approaches

Unemployment rates increased in 40 of the state's 72 counties in November including seven counties in Northwest Wisconsin. An increase in unemployment in November is typical as seasonal weather affects working conditions for many outdoor jobs and the departure of the final fall visitors in late October reduces the need for tourism-related workers.

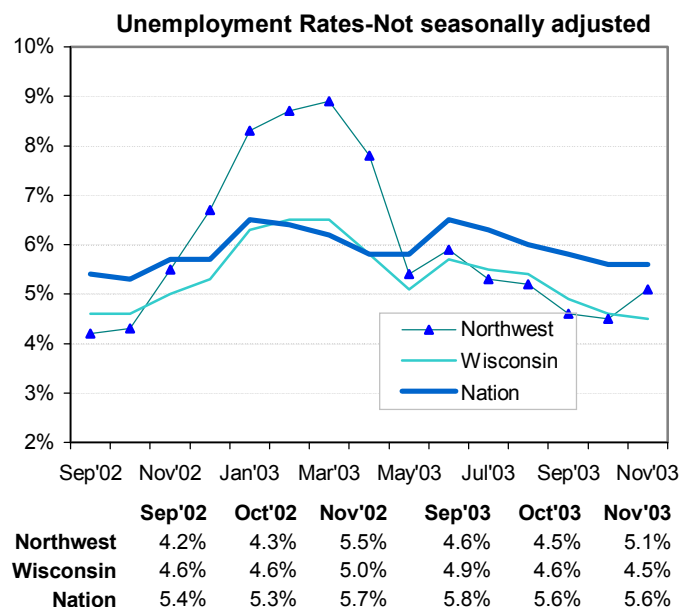
The unemployment rate for the northwest region increased to 5.1 percent in November from 4.5 percent in October but is lower than the 5.5 percent unemployed one year ago. Out of a total labor force of 95,500, roughly 4,850 were unemployed. The number of unemployed increased by 500 residents over last month.

The Wisconsin unemployment rate, not seasonally adjusted, dropped from 4.6 percent in October to 4.5 percent in November. This was the lowest unemployment rate in the state since December 2001. One year ago 5.0 percent of the labor force was unemployed in Wisconsin. Both the state unemployment rate and the rate in Northwest Wisconsin were lower than the national unemployment rate in November of 5.6 percent, not seasonally adjusted. Seasonally adjusted the unemployment rates in November in Wisconsin and the nation were 5.0 and 5.9 percent, respectively.

The two counties in the northwest with lower unemployment rates in November were Price and Doug-

las. In Price County the unemployment rate declined from 4.4 to 4.3 percent and in Douglas the rate dropped from 4.8 to 4.7 percent. The unemployment rate in Ashland County of 5.9 percent was unchanged from October. The current rate in Ashland and Price is also below the rate of one year ago.

There were 60 counties in the state with a lower unemployment rate in November than twelve months



Civilian Labor Force Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin counties: Current month - November 2003

	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02
Civilian labor force	8,524	8,834	8,402	7,812	7,934	7,706	8,025	7,990	7,628	23,279	23,293	22,987	3,340	3,331	3,357
Employed	8,024	8,312	7,809	7,336	7,600	7,140	7,704	7,718	7,285	22,188	22,169	21,949	3,107	3,161	3,036
Unemployed	500	522	593	476	334	566	321	272	343	1,091	1,124	1,038	233	170	321
% unemployed	5.9	5.9	7.1	6.1	4.2	7.3	4.0	3.4	4.5	4.7	4.8	4.5	7.0	5.1	9.6

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02
Civilian labor force	7,533	7,573	7,070	7,235	7,259	7,058	10,430	10,616	10,582	11,160	11,209	10,635	8,170	8,289	7,981
Employed	7,209	7,242	6,752	6,884	6,936	6,622	9,886	10,210	10,000	10,681	10,791	10,145	7,637	7,838	7,489
Unemployed	324	331	318	351	323	436	544	406	582	479	418	490	533	451	492
% unemployed	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.9	4.4	6.2	5.2	3.8	5.5	4.3	3.7	4.6	6.5	5.4	6.2

* not seasonally adjusted

Industry Employment Estimates for Northwest Wisconsin: Current month - November 2003

(Employment in thousands)	Ashland			Bayfield			Burnett			Douglas			Iron		
	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02
Total Nonfarm	8.9	9.1	9.2	4.1	4.4	3.9	5.2	5.2	5.0	18.9	18.9	18.3	2.3	2.3	2.3
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.5	0.6	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	0.4	0.3	1.0	1.1	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.3
Manufacturing	1.2	1.2	1.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.5	0.5	0.4
Trade	1.1	1.1	1.1	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.6	0.6	3.3	3.2	3.2	0.4	0.4	0.4
Transportation & Utilities	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.2	2.1	2.2	0.1	0.1	0.0
Financial Activities	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.5	0.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.1
Education & Health Services	1.9	1.9	1.8	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.7	0.6	0.6	1.8	1.8	1.8	0.3	0.3	0.3
Leisure & Hospitality	1.0	1.1	1.0	1.1	1.3	0.9	0.7	0.7	0.6	2.4	2.4	2.2	0.3	0.3	0.3
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.3	3.4	3.4	2.9	0.1	0.1	0.1
Total Government	2.0	2.1	2.2	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.5	1.4	1.4	3.4	3.3	3.4	0.3	0.3	0.4

	Price			Rusk			Sawyer			Taylor			Washburn		
	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02	Nov '03	Oct '03	Nov '02
Total Nonfarm	7.1	7.0	6.7	6.1	6.1	6.0	7.1	7.2	7.3	9.4	9.4	9.1	6.0	6.1	6.0
Const/Min'g/Nat. Resources	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3
Manufacturing	2.9	2.8	2.7	2.1	2.1	2.1	0.6	0.6	0.6	2.8	2.8	2.8	0.9	1.0	1.1
Trade	0.7	0.7	0.7	0.6	0.6	0.6	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.4	0.9	0.9	0.9
Transportation & Utilities	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.2
Financial Activities	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2
Education & Health Services	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.7	0.7	0.7	1.2	1.2	1.1	0.9	0.9	0.8
Leisure & Hospitality	0.4	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.4	0.3	1.1	1.2	1.3	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.7
Info, Prof/Bus.Srv, Othr Srv.	0.7	0.7	0.5	0.6	0.6	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	1.2	1.2	1.0	0.4	0.4	0.4
Total Government	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.4	1.4	1.4	1.9	1.9	2.0	1.1	1.1	1.1	1.4	1.4	1.4

Current month preliminary. Estimates based on March 2002 benchmark. Summing from unrounded numbers.

earlier, including eight counties in Northwest Wisconsin. In Iron County the November unemployment rate of 7.0 percent was lower than the 9.6 percent rate from November 2002. In Rusk County the rate of 4.9 percent was down from 6.2 percent twelve months earlier, and in Bayfield the current 6.1 percent unemployed is less than 7.3 percent last November. In Burnett County the unemployment rate declined from 4.5 percent in November 2002 to the current 4.0 percent, in Taylor the rate dropped from 4.6 to 4.3 percent and in Sawyer the rate declined from 5.5 to 5.2 percent.

The unemployment rate in Douglas County is currently higher than the rate twelve months ago of 4.5 percent and in Washburn County the current rate of 6.5 percent is higher than 6.2 percent in November 2002.

The number of jobs with area employers declined in November. The job reductions occurred primarily with employers in construction and leisure and hospitality. Construction employers reduced their payroll by 240 jobs in November and workers in all ten counties were laid off during the month. Employers in leisure and hospitality, on the other hand, laid off 650 workers in November.

Even as most employers were cutting back a few added jobs during the month. Of note is the increase in manufacturing of 120 jobs, primarily from the addi-

tional workers needed to produce holiday garlands and wreaths. Most of these jobs are in Price County and employment is temporary, usually ending by the second week in December.

While the number of manufacturing jobs is still fewer than one year ago, employment in all other industry sectors except government is higher than one year ago. However, the local job market, like that in Wisconsin, remains sluggish in spite of the generally positive news about the national economy.

The number of residents in Northwest Wisconsin that filed a claim for unemployment compensation benefits rose from 2,020 in mid-October to 2,865 by mid-November. The number takes another big jump by mid-December to 3,885. These numbers of weekly claims filed in 2003 are very close to the number of claims filed in the same week in 2002.

The number of initial claims for unemployment benefits, on the other hand, have been down compared with one year earlier. This would indicate that although there are fewer residents opening claims for unemployment the duration of a claim is for more weeks than in past years.

The rise in unemployment claims over the last few weeks also indicates that unemployment will increase in December, as it has in most years.

Look for the most current Labor Market Information at: WWW.DWD.STATE.WI.US/LMI

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